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Middle East-Africa-South Asia

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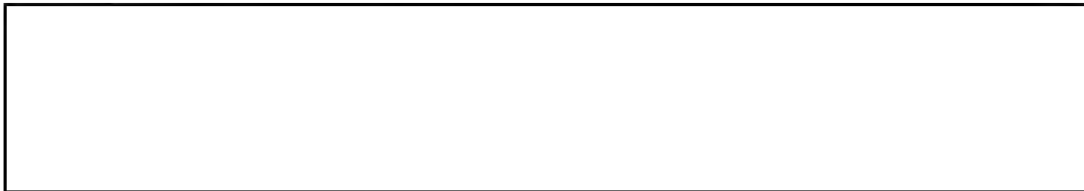
December 23, 1975

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C O N T E N T S



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India: Congress Party Pow-wow 3

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India

Congress Party Pow-wow

Important political decisions by the government may be revealed at a five-day meeting of ruling Congress Party officials scheduled to begin on December 29 in Chandigarh. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi will probably use the meeting primarily to secure endorsement of her actions since assuming emergency powers six months ago, but she may possibly provide some clarification on such key questions as the duration of the emergency and whether national elections will be held on schedule next spring. According to the Indian rumor mill, Gandhi may use the occasion to announce the release of a number of detained opposition political leaders.

Gandhi's remarks at the session may also throw some light on the agenda of the next parliamentary session, which begins on January 5. There are indications she may seek to transform parliament into a constituent assembly or introduce constitutional amendments that would provide for a presidential system of government and/or reduce the powers of the courts.

The Congress Youth Party, which Gandhi's son Sanjay is trying to revitalize and use as a personal power base, will hold concurrent special meetings. Both groups can be expected to demonstrate support for Gandhi's package of socio-economic reforms aimed at winning popular backing for the government.



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